



Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year for us all at Ark Dickens Primary!

We have had a great first week back at school and the children have been completely fabulous! Thank you so much for the fact that the children have come back looking smart and ready to learn. There have been some really happy times together since Tuesday and we are looking forward to a great term together.

Priorities for the New Year

On our Inset Day on Monday we decided upon three priorities for the New Year which sit beneath our overarching aim of “**Learning for life, Aiming for Excellence**”. These are three rules for the term which we all members of the community, Staff, Children, Parents are being asked to follow. They apply to both and we have chosen them because we feel they will make a huge difference to continuing improvements we are making to the life of our school. They are:

- ❖ **Be here** (this means come to school every day, ontime, every day)
- ❖ **Be Kind** (if everyone in the school aimed for kindness the school would be transformed)
- ❖ **Work Hard** (nothing is achieved unless we all work hard)

What are we expecting parents to do:

Bring your children to school, on time, without excuse:

Our school will NEVER be classed as a good school unless our attendance improves. In the Autumn Term this fell to 93.5% with many, many children having very low attendance – around the 70% mark. This is really

unacceptable and we are looking for you to make dramatic improvements this term. You have a legal responsibility to provide your children with an education. If you want that education to be at Ark Dickens you have to bring them to us every day unless they are vomiting or have a high temperature and they need to be here on time every day. Many of our late children are missing out on the basics of learning which are built on during the day and they need to be here. Mrs Prior, our new attendance officer will be supporting parents with this improvement over the coming few weeks and we will be taking legal action if improvements are not forthcoming. Thank you so much to all of those parents who bring their children in every day and on time and some amazing achievement in attendance are evident in the school, some children not having had a day off in all the time they have been with us. Those children are achieving very well as a result.

Volunteers needed please:

We are looking to recruit 12 Parents / grandparents / family members – who could, this term commit to coming into school on a regular basis for this term, to listen to some children read regularly. This will be key to helping some children rapidly improve their reading ability and if you feel you could do that then please make contact with the Reception Office in the first instance and I will be in touch with you about this specific project. Thank you so much.

CHANGES TO INSET DAYS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH

Just to inform parents that the Inset Days originally planned for 19th February and 19th March have been moved. The NEW Inset Days will now be on Monday 16th April and Thursday 5th July. All other training days will remain in place. The next whole school training day will

be on Friday 16th March when the school will be closed to children Apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

Now onto the news for this week:

Nursery News

Happy New Year. It's been a great first week back.

We have been amazed at how well the children have settled back into Nursery.

We have had some new children starting this week & some next week which is really exciting. Snack money is now due, it is £2.50 for this term.

If your child is going to start school next year don't forget your application needs to be submitted by Monday 15th January.

Next week in Nursery we will be learning to tell the story of 'Dear Zoo'.

We would like you to bring your pets in to see us. Please come & tell us if you have a pet that you could bring in.

Reception

Welcome back. Hope you've had a lovely Christmas and a happy new year!

In numeracy we will be learning to count to 15 and order numbers 0 – 15. To help your child play games like counting steps, counting pasta and sweets etc.

In literacy we are learning to write a sentence using finger spaces and sounds. To help your child, play Fred talk games like I can see a c-a-t. (Remember to use sounds not letter names.)

Year 1

It is great to have the children back after the holidays and they have had a fantastic week. Our Topic this term is dinosaurs. Next week we will be learning some technical language about the dinosaurs such as herbivore and carnivore. It would be useful if you could talk to your children about the dinosaurs at home.

In maths we have started learning about time and next week will be learning about what o'clock and half past means. Feel free to test your children on clock times at home.

Year 2

The children have settled back in to school life very quickly and have enjoyed getting straight back in to their learning. We start next week with our visit to Gunwharf, please take your money to the cash office and return your slip by Monday. Next week, the children will be continuing their work on learning to tell the time. Help them practise this at home using both analogue and digital clocks. We will be writing recounts of their visit, talk to them about what they have done and ask them to talk about it in the correct order. Please try and hear your child read at least 3 times per week at home and remind them to bring their book in every day.

Year 3

This week Year 3 have been very excited about beginning their new topic inventors and inventions. We have already started researching into famous inventors and the purpose of inventions. In Literacy we will be learning about explanation texts in preparation to write our own explanation text about an invention. In maths we will be learning about multiplication and division. In topic we will continue to be learn about famous inventors and inventions that have changed people's lives.

Please can you make sure all Year 3 children have full PE kits ready for next week. Our PE days are Monday (outdoor) and Wednesday (indoor).

Year 4

This week we have been studying 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' by C.S Lewis. The children have really enjoyed the opening chapter and have worked hard describing settings in their writing. In numeracy we have been investigating fractions and understanding how this can be used in 'real-life'.

Next week the children will be focusing on some of the characters discovered in Narnia and will

be creating their very own mythical characters. In numeracy we will be calculating fractions.

A polite reminder that our PE days are on a Monday and a Thursday so please can we ensure that children come to school well equipped for PE on these days.

Year 5

It has been wonderful to have our amazing classes back this term, we hope you have all had a pleasant Christmas and New Year. The children have been thoroughly enjoying the beginning of our Rainforest topic and have thought of lots of interesting things that they want to find out about.

Our class story for this half term is 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo. We will be using this in our literacy lessons next week to write descriptively and informatively about survival.

In maths we will be learning about fractions: adding and subtracting fractions that have different denominators (bottom number). Please send in any shoeboxes or large cereal boxes that you have as we need them for our art project about the rainforest. **Also, please ensure that your child has their PE kit in school with warm/suitable clothing for outdoor PE (e.g. tracksuit top and bottoms, trainers).**

Thank you

Year 6

The term has got off to a great start, the children are highly engaged by the topic of World War II and are equally enjoying our literacy book, Goodnight Mr Tom, by Michelle Magorian. Some of the issues explored in the book are quite controversial and it has already sparked some interesting debate. Next week we will begin an exploration of the word 'ritual' in R.E. This learning journey focuses on Islam (the previous two in the autumn term being Christian based). Our science is about water, acids and alkalis. Finally, just to let you know Mr Brotherton will be out on Tuesday and Wednesday to attend a mini-bus driving training course. We hope that once he has done

this the year group can go off site more often to bring learning alive and enrich their experience of learning.

On behalf of the Y6 team, a very happy new year.